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Iraq
Status Report
October 28, 2009

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Administration Buildings Are Targets of Large-Scale Truck Bombs (*SECURITY*, page 4)**

- **PM Maliki Holds High-level Meetings with U.S. Officials (*DIPLOMATIC*, page 6).**

- **New Coalitions Created in Preparation for January Elections (*POLITICAL*, page 7).**

- **U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference Held in Washington D.C. (ECONOMIC, page 11).**

SECURITY – Transition

Large-scale bombings target GOI buildings in Baghdad

Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Administration Buildings Are Targets of Large-Scale Truck Bombs:

- Iraqi Security Forces installed roadblocks around Baghdad and conducted searches at checkpoints in response to twin truck bombings that killed at least 155 people and wounded over 700 others on October 25. The attacks targeted the Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Administration. Major General Qassim al-Moussawi, a spokesman for the city's operations command center, reported that the initial investigation suggested the vehicles, each packed with thousands of pounds of explosives, might have passed through some security checkpoints before hitting their destination. Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani said that 76 people have been arrested in connection with the blasts, but gave no details on who they were or how they were connected. The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), an al-Qaida linked terrorist group, claimed responsibility for the twin suicide truck bombings. A statement posted on the internet by the ISI said that it's "martyrs ... targeted the dens of infidelity." The ISI, the same group who claimed responsibility for the August 19 attacks on the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance, is a military coalition within Iraq in which al-Qaida is a leading member. The October 25 attack on the Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Administration was Iraq's deadliest attack in two years.

SECURITY – Situation

ISF conduct counter-insurgent operations in northern Iraq

Iraqi Police Capture Suspected ISI Leader:

- **Iraqi Police, with U.S. advisors, captured a suspected Islamic State of Iraq leader and three known accomplices in Bayji, located approximately 100 kilometers southwest of Kirkuk. Intelligence indicates that the suspected ISI leader was also involved with insurgents in Hawijah. In a similar operation, Iraqi Army (IA) forces arrested three suspects in Mosul during security searches focused on Mosul ISI extortion-network leaders. The IA searched several buildings for a suspected extortionist and stolen monies used to fund IED attacks against civilians and ISF.**

DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement

PM Maliki holds high-level meetings with U.S. officials on the sidelines of the U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference

PM Maliki Visits Washington:

- **Prime Minister Maliki was in the United States to attend the U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference from October 18-21. PM Maliki met with President Obama, Vice President Biden, and Secretary of State Clinton. President Obama stood by his commitment to have all U.S. combat troops withdrawn from Iraq by August 2010, and urged Maliki to ensure that the Council of Representatives quickly passed an election law for the national elections planned for January 2010.**

Germany Announces Iraq Investment Conference:

- **The German Embassy in Baghdad announced to the media that Germany would host a two-day investment conference for Iraq in Berlin in November. The conference will take place on the 5th and the 6th of November in Berlin.**

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation

New coalitions created in preparation for January elections

New Political Coalitions Announced:

- **Iraq's Unity Alliance, a new coalition established to run in January's parliamentary elections, was officially announced on October 21. The alliance is comprised of prominent Iraqi politicians, including Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani and Head of Sahawa al-Iraq, Sheikh Ahmad Abu Rieha al-Rishawi. Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and Sunni politician Salih Mutlaq are combining forces to create the Iraqi Nationalist Movement, which will bring together many of the parliamentary blocs they both control.**

New KRG Cabinet Approved:

- **The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament confirmed and swore in a new Cabinet for the Kurdistan Regional Government on October 28th, including approving former Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih as the new KRG Prime Minister. The Cabinet was reduced to nineteen ministers, aside from the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, and leaves one minister unannounced. In his acceptance speech, Salih focused on the need for reform and good governance in the region as well as improvement on the delivery of essential services.**

POLITICAL – Government of Iraq

Coalition Affiliation (at time of appointment)
United Iraq Alliance
Kurdistani Alliance
Iraqi Accord Front
Iraqi National List
Other / Independent

(F) = Female

***Formerly Iraqiya

Prime Minister
Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

President
Jalal Talabani

Deputy President
Tariq al-Hashimi

Deputy President
Adil Abd al-Mahdi

Deputy Prime Minister
Rafi Hiad Jiad al-Issawi

Deputy Prime Minister
Dr. Barham Ahmed Salih

Minister of Agriculture
Vacant

Minister of Communications
Faruq Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman

Minister of Culture
Mahir Dilli Ibrahim al-Hadithi

Minister of Defense
Abd al-Qadr al-Mufriji

Minister of Displacement & Migration
Dr. Abd al-Samad Rahman Sultan

Minister of Electricity
Dr. Karim Wahid al-Hasan

Minister of Education
Dr. Khudayr Mousa Jaffar al-Khuzai

Minister of Environment
Dr. Nermin Othman Hassan (F)

Minister of Finance
Bayan Jabr

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hoshyar Mahmud Zebari

Minister of Health
Dr. Salih Mahdi Mutlab al-Hasnawi

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abid Dhiyab al-Ujayli

Minister of Human Rights
Eng. Wijdan Mikhail Salim (F)

Minister of Industry & Minerals
Fawzi Fransu Hariri

Minister of Interior
Jawad Kadhum Eidan al-Bulani

Minister of Justice
Dara Nur al-Din

Minister of Housing & Construction
Bayan Dizayee (F)

Minister of Labor & Social Affairs
Eng. Mahmud Muhammad Jawad al-Radi

Minister of Oil
Dr. Husayn Ibrahim al-Shahristani

Minister of Planning
Ali Ghalib Baban

Minister of Trade
Vacant

Minister of Science & Technology
Dr. Raid Jahid Fahmi

Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
Riyadh Abd al-Hamza Gharib

Minister of Transportation
Amir Abd al-Jabar Ismail

Minister of Water Resources
Dr. Abd al-Latif Jamal Rashid

Minister of Youth & Sports
Eng. Jasim Muhammad Jaffar

Minister of State for Civil Society Affairs
Dr. Thamir Jafar al-Zubaidi

Minister of State for National Dialogue
Dr. Akram Mousa Hadi al-Hakim

Minister of State for National Security
Eng. Shirwan Kamil al-Waili

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Dr. Muhammad Munajid Aifan al-Dulaymi

Minister of State for Provinces Affairs
Dr. Khulud Sami Izzara al-Majun (F)

Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquities
Dr. Qahtan Abbas Numanal-Jabburi

Minister of State for Women's Affairs
Dr. Khulud Sami Izzara al-Majun (F), Acting)

Minister of State for CoR Affairs
Safa al-Din Muhammad al-Safi

Minister of State at Large
Muhammad Abbas Muhammad al-Uraybi

Minister of State at Large
Ali Muhammad Ahmad

Minister of State at Large
Hasan Radhi Kazim al-Sari

POLITICAL – Key Legislative Issues

Legislative Process

Council of Ministers (CoM) → **Shura Council** → **Council of Representatives (COR)**: Debate after 2nd Reading, Vote after 3rd Reading, and Committee Reports Throughout → **Presidency Council** → **Published in Official Gazette**

- **Hydrocarbons Package:** The Framework Law was resubmitted to the Oil and Gas Committee on October 26, 2008 and then returned to the Council of Ministers. There has been no progress on the other three laws in the package.

- **NGO Law:** This law will regulate the operations and funding of Non-Governmental Organizations operating within Iraq. It received its first reading in the Council of Representatives on April 20, 2009.

- **National Elections Law:** A draft of a proposed national elections law is in committee but has not been finalized.

POLITICAL - Refugee Update

- **There are 295,304 Iraqi refugees currently registered with UNHCR in neighboring countries. There are likely significant numbers of unregistered refugees as well. UNHCR reports that 1.5 million Iraqis displaced by sectarian violence following the Samarra Mosque bombing of February 2006 remain internally displaced in Iraq.**

- **In FY09, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration contributed $ 303.4 million to international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to assist displaced Iraqis inside the country and in the region.**

- **The U.S. admitted 18,838 Iraqi refugees in FY09.**

- **Since the program's inception in FY07, 34,510 Iraqi refugees have been admitted for U.S. resettlement.**
- **As of June 2009, a total of 770 Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) have been issued for Iraqi translators and interpreters since FY08 (under the Section 1059 program).**

- **As of June 2009, a total of 2,081 SIVs have been issued for Iraqis employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government since FY08 (under the Section 1244 program).**

- **Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced July 24 that the United States was contributing more than $100 million in new assistance to support the return and reintegration of displaced Iraqis.**

ECONOMIC – Private Sector

U.S. and Iraqi investors and government officials come together to promote business and investment opportunities in Iraq

U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference Held in Washington D.C.:

- **Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and numerous high-level Iraqi officials attended the U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference October 20 and 21 in Washington D.C. along with Iraqi and American business executives. The conference, which touted that Iraq was "open for business," was held to promote investment in Iraq and connect U.S. and Iraqi businesses. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opened the conference with Prime Minister Maliki and encouraged U.S investors to seize the opportunities Iraq had to offer.**

ECONOMIC – Oil

Oil prices are rising, but exports and production remain below 2009 targets

Crude Oil Update:

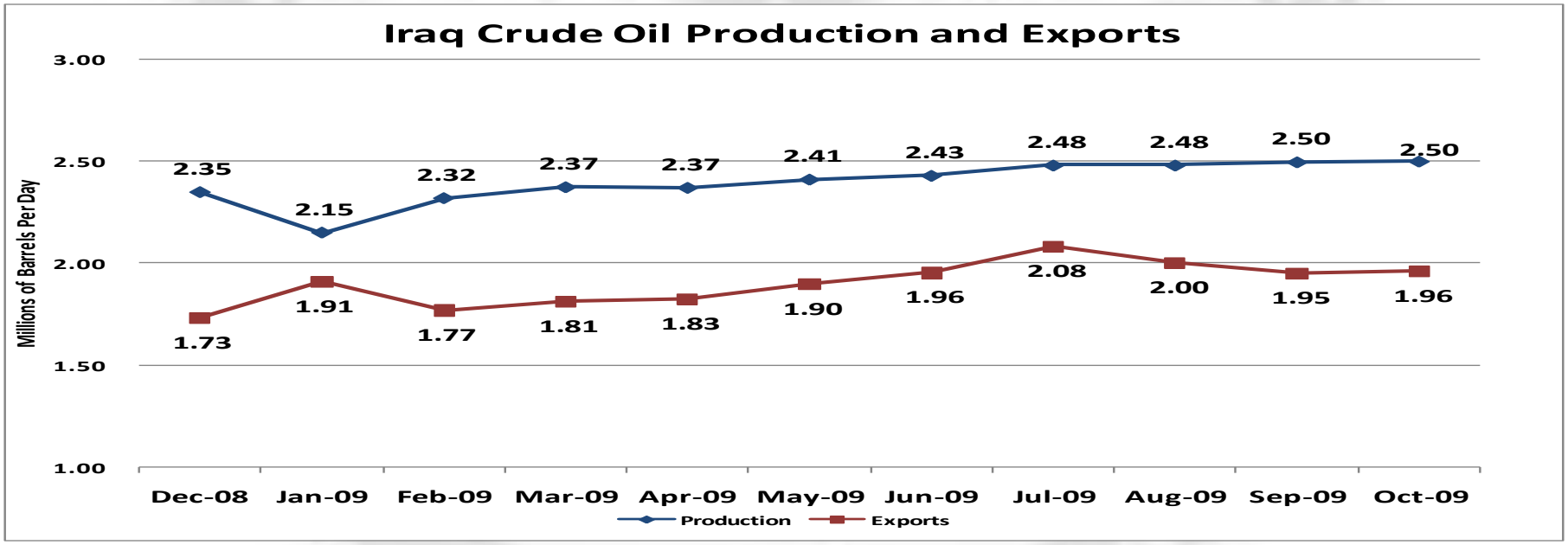
Price averages in world markets closed with the following prices:

Basrah Light at $76.50barrel

Dated Brent at $77.27/barrel

WTI Cushing at $80.13/barrel

Oman/Dubai at $77.13/barrel



Revenue estimates:

2007: $41.0 Billion **2008: $61.9 Billion** **2009 (ytd): $28.5 Billion**

*New revenue formula is used for 2009 that is more accurate, if lower.

ECONOMIC – Oil

Talks over oil fields continue as Iraq's second oil and gas bid round approaches

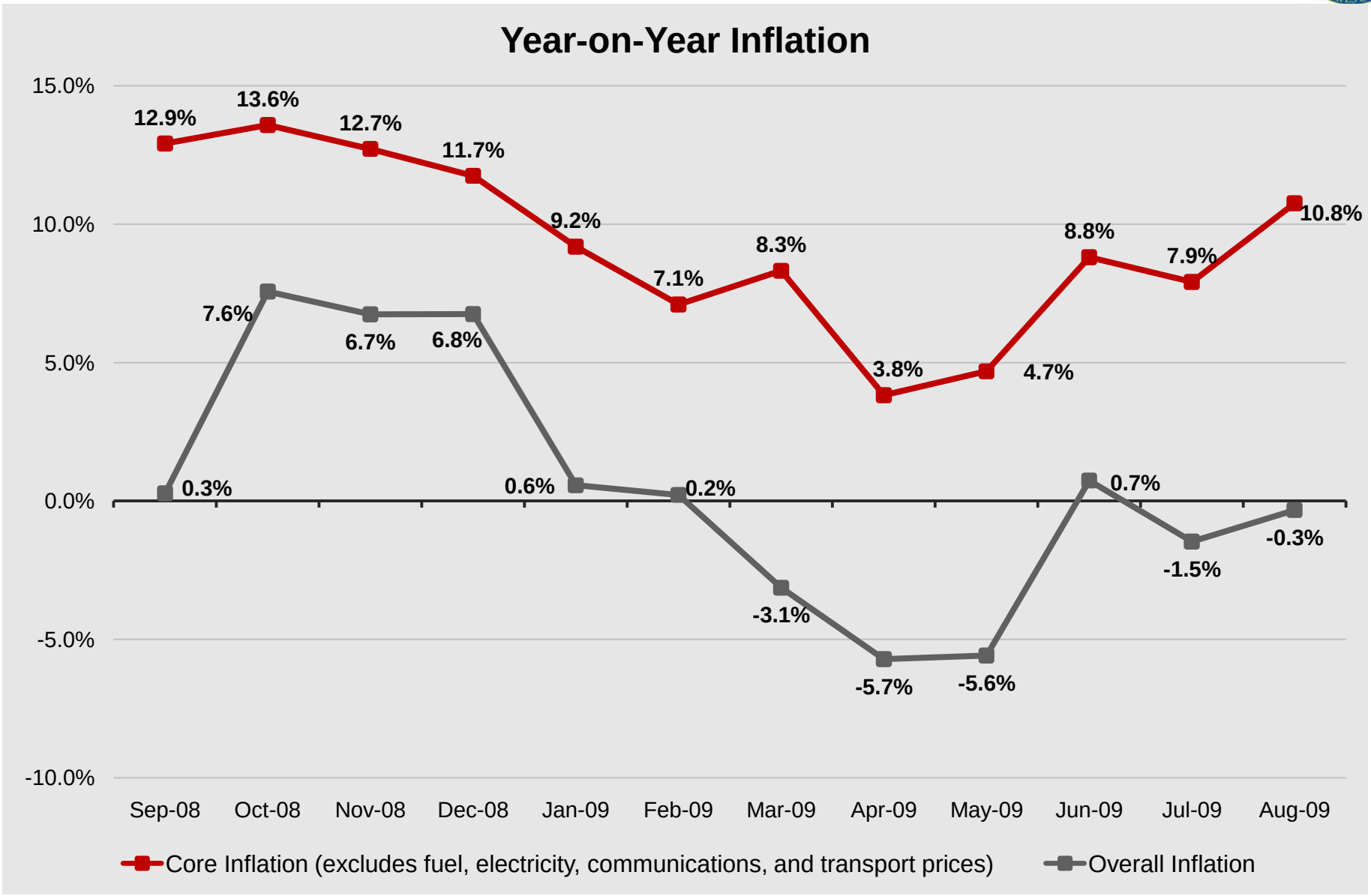
Shaikan Oil Field Findings "Significant":

- **Hungary's largest refiner, Mol Nyrt, announced that the preliminary test results from the Shaikan oil field, as reported by its partner Gulf Keystone, seem significant. Gulf Keystone said that its findings were a "value transforming discovery."**

Eni May Sign Contract for Zubair Field:

- **The CEO of the Italian firm Eni SpA Paolo Scaroni said his firm may sign a contract to develop the Zubair field shortly and added that the possibility of it bidding on the Nassiriyah field was "very low." Eni was not considered the leading bidder for the field.**

ECONOMIC - Fiscal and Monetary Affairs



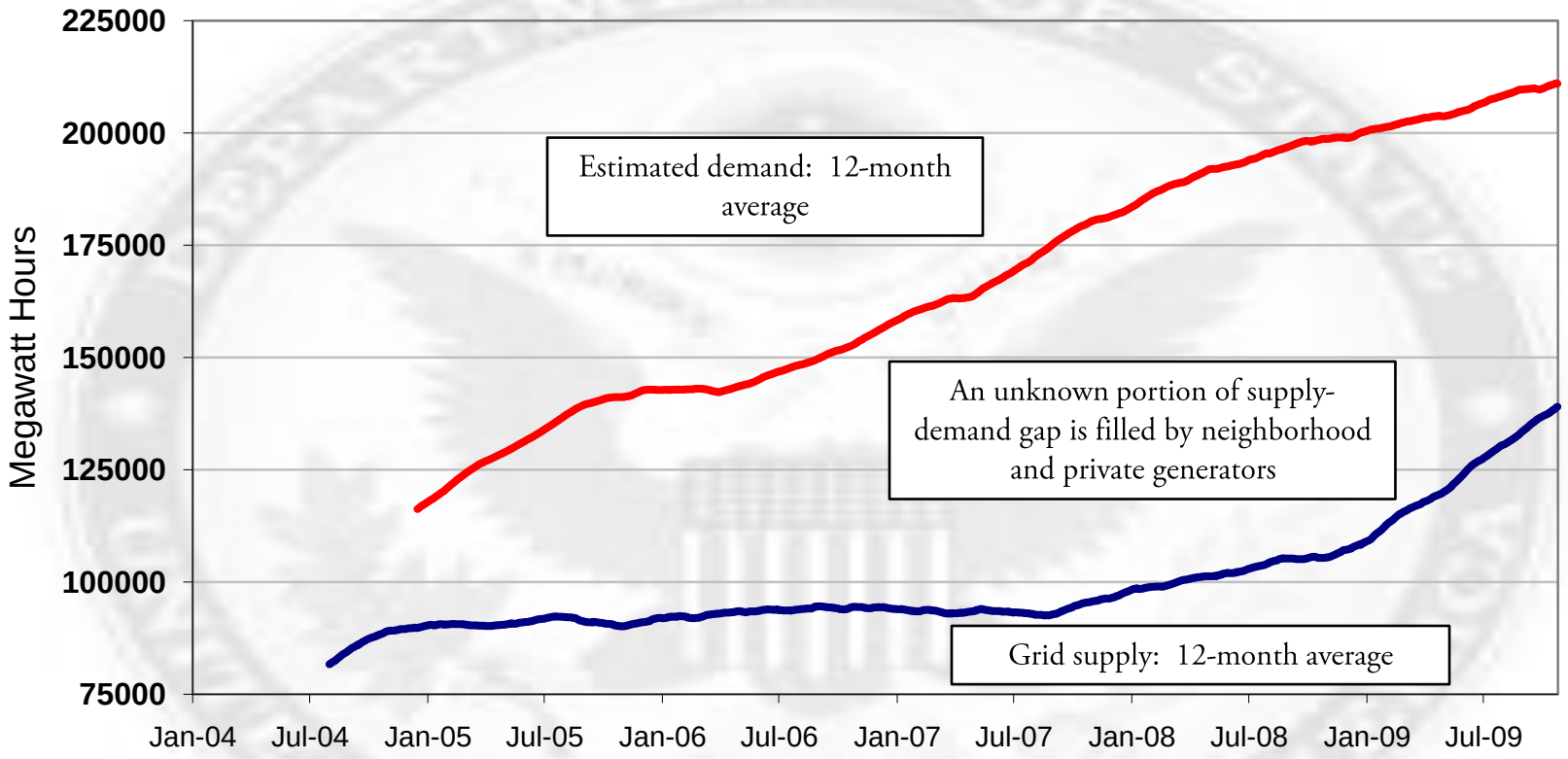
ECONOMIC – Fiscal and Monetary Affairs

Negotiations continue between Iraq and the IMF over $5.5 billion loan

Economic Indicator	This Week	Last Week	Last Month	Last Year
Iraqi Commercial Bond Sales				
Price (USD)	$77.31	$77.02	$75.51	$66.08
Yield	8.22%	8.26%	8.87%	10.96%

Public Services – Electricity

Daily Electricity Supply from the Grid and Estimated Daily Demand



- October 18-24 electricity supply from the grid was 35% above the year-earlier period and met 73% of estimated demand, compared with 57% for the earlier period .

ECONOMIC – Health

Fears of swine flu prompt school closures

Schools Closed in Iraq as Fear of H1N1 Outbreak Mounts:

- **Nearly 2,500 schools throughout Iraq were closed due to a fear of the H1N1 flu virus, in what some health officials have called an overreaction. Many parents are keeping their children home from school or sending them out wearing surgical masks, and some have complained that the Health Ministry has not provided them with enough information about the disease. According to the Ministry of Health, Iraq has had 121 confirmed cases of swine flu and three deaths.**

Beyond Baghdad

Ninewa AG advisor works with Kurdish farmer

"…we will help Iraq's institutions strengthen their capacity to protect the rule of law, confront corruption, and deliver basic services."

President Barack Obama

Recent Highlights

Ninewa

Ninewa's agricultural industry has received a much-needed boost through the Greenhouse Demonstration program, which provides greenhouses, or hoop houses as they are known in Iraq, to local farmers. The PRT agricultural advisor has worked closely with Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and the Ninewa General Directorate to build the hoop houses through a lottery system. In exchange for the hoop houses and associated training, farmers will repay a portion of their profits to agricultural associations to fund additional houses.

Basrah

Basrah PRT held a grand opening for a potable-water distribution site. The site is now operational for authorized tankers to fill up and distribute drinking water throughout the province. Potable-water output to the site is close to 10 million liters per day. Basrah has faced an acute water shortage for months as a result of the drought in Iraq and decreased water flow from the upstream sources of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The PRT is exploring the possibility of increasing water distribution to the Umm Qasr port over the next year.

Maysan

Maysan PRT assisted in the effort to bring specialized medical training to Maysani doctors, nurses, and health care administrators. The "Train the Trainer" exercise was held at the request of the Maysan Department of Health and the al Sadr Surgical Hospital. Providers attended trauma and critical care sessions taught by American medical staff. The training is in high demand with Iraqi health care providers requesting more instruction.

CONTACT INFORMATION

This brief draws from multiple sources. References are cited on the following pages.

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- **Department of Defense, Section 9010 Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq**
  http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/Iraq_Reports/index.html

Please forward all questions and/or comments to:

NEA-I-IPOG-DL@state.gov

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